



## Borough Council- Work Session Meeting January 22, 2024

The Work Session Meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by Council President Tracy W. Burke at 7:00pm.

The following Borough Council and staff were present:

Council President Tracy W. Burke	Mayor Daniel L. Yocum
Councilor Matthew J. DiNenna	Junior Councilor Elijah S. Steglik
Councilor Stephanie Hall	Borough Manager Stacy E. Crandell
Councilor Edward M. Huber	Police Chief Brian A. Newhall
Councilor Daryl W. Littlefield	Public Works Director Steven Coll
Councilor Julie A. Munden	Administrative Assistant Christine Nicholas
Councilor Donna M. Rogers	
Councilor Matthew R. Sholly	
Councilor Richard M. Walczak	

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell started the meeting with the discussion of 76 S. County Line Road – BrightPath Kids. Layla Salehli, representative for the builder and Gene Gatenuk, owner of the property. They attended the January 3<sup>rd</sup> Planning Commission Meeting to change the use of the property from a fitness center to a day care center. The Planning Commission proposed some changes before they could approve the tenant. The proposed changes included restriping the parking lot, safety of the children, direct access to County Line Road, 4 ft. fencing, approved signage and playground specifications using a fully permeable surface. There was discussion regarding the “emergency rally point” being shared by BrightPath kids and EMC Elementary School. Chief Newhall was in contact with the school to discuss the idea of sharing the area. A motion by Councilor Matthew DiNenna and seconded by Councilor Stephanie Hall to approve Item 2 on the agenda to allow 76 S. County Line Road – BrightPath Kids project to move towards the permitting phase. The motion was approved.

Council President Tracy W. Burke spoke on his discussion with the council about focusing on certain projects for 2024. Planning, Execution and Savings is the model for 2024. The council would like to see the following:

- 10% decrease in operating costs
- Hold the line on taxes.
- Increase the capital reserve.
- Put a hold on discretionary spending.
- Operational Excellence
- Temporary hold on hiring new staff.
- More planning for Capital Projects

Council President Tracy W. Burke announced his committee assignments as follows:

- Executive/Administrative Group – Councilors Munden, Burke, and DiNenna
- Finance/Budget Committee – Councilors Munden, Huber, Walczak and Rogers
- Public Safety Committee – Councilors Munden, Walczak, and Sholly
- Economic Development Committee – Councilors Hall, Littlefield and Sholly
- Communications/Public Outreach Committee – Councilors Hall, Littlefield, and Rogers



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- Parks and Recreation Committee – Councilors DiNenna, Littlefield, and Walczak

Councilor Daryl Littlefield gave an update on Souderton Connects. He talked about “3rd Fridays,” and the Business Bytes program being held on February 22, 2024. Photos of the new Mural at Broad Street and School Road were provided.

Police Chief Brian Newhall provided the December report. The police department received 8,600 calls. Major crime was down 25% while seeing a rise in Minor crimes of 13%. He discussed the stop arm law for school buses has expired so once it is renewed, they will be receiving two months’ worth of video from the school buses. Two catalytic converter thefts were reported, and good information was obtained after the fact. The Police Department Renovation is going well. Chief Newhall provided the council with the 2023 Annual Report and reviewed the achieved goals. In 2023, Souderton Borough Police attended 36 Community events, 30 of them with the Police Motorcycle. They applied for 4 grants, receiving none and suggested the grants were unfairly disbursed. Chief Newhall also asked for support from the board to be able to process at the County instead of in Lansdale. He will provide them with a template for a letter of support. Chief Newhall also discussed the need to purchase a new police vehicle. A local dealer has offered a vehicle for the price of \$38,000 and will hold it until the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in March. It will be an additional \$16,000 to outfit it for use bringing the total to \$54,000. Many of the current vehicles need constant repair. It was suggested that we check the value of the current vehicles to see what they could be sold for. It was also suggested that we get a report of repair maintenance for 2023. Chief Newhall stated with this purchase he would have no vehicle over 8 years old. It was suggested that the Public Safety Committee decide by the next work session.

Public Works Director Steve Coll reported that they were almost finished taking down the Christmas lights and the Christmas tree was being taken down, along with the icicle light on the pavilion and bandshell. They have several items, like the old skate park equipment, to be put up for sale on Muncibid.

Police Chief Brian Newhall requested a change to the facial hair policy. The change would allow facial hair with the understanding that it must be well kept and groomed with no neck hair and no ponytails. Councilor Matt Sholly motioned to approve the change and Councilor Daryl Littlefield seconded. The motion passed.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell spoke of the Public Works Facility Options regarding the PECO property. Ms. Crandell has been in touch with PECO about taking a portion of the property and in return maintaining it for no cost to PECO, allowing PECO to park its vehicles there and still have the building that is on the property.

Regarding the Road Program Bid Update, many of the borough’s roads need repair. Steve and Geoff from Gilmore have been working on this project. We would look to pay for the program using ARPA funds for the roads and curbing, but the sidewalks are still the resident’s responsibility. It was proposed to find a contractor that would provide a “bulk price” to offer residents if they repaired their sidewalks within a certain amount of time. That blacktop lasts about 15 -20 years so it is time to redo. We would like to have a regular maintenance schedule for the roads and the curbing must be included with the roads. Ms. Crandell explained that at an upcoming work session there will be a discussion about the maintenance of the alleys and revisiting the policy that was adopted in 2006.



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Borough Manager Stacy Crandell provided the Wastewater Treatment Plant Quarterly Report. Currently, the area where Leidy's Meats sits is having a backup problem. Upon review, a Muffin Monster Grinder needs to be added to remedy the problem. Sewer fees have been raised this year but with expensive projects such as this and the updates that will eventually need to be made as our sewer plant is over 30 years old, we will be looking at a lot of funds being needed soon.

Ms. Crandell presented recreation items starting with the pool plastering bid. We received three applications and had to reject them all as the companies did not follow the instructions. A motion by Councilor Matthew DiNenna and seconded by Councilor Richard Walczak to reject all bids for the Pool Plastering Project and rebid the project on Pennbid. The motion was approved.

The Pool Membership Fees and Forms have been updated and we are currently preparing to include them on RecDesk. This year the pool will be members only from 12:00pm to 1:00pm daily. We will be offering a resident and non-resident rate. We are also trying to have the photos on the membership cards. A motion by Councilor Matthew DiNenna and seconded by Councilor Stephanie Hall to approve the Membership Fees and Form. The motion passed. It was reported that maintenance on the railings of the pool slides was needed due to rust. We are looking for a coating that will help the current and future problems.

Park rental fees and form were also reviewed, and Borough Staff hope to have them on RecDesk soon once approved. The pavilion can be rented from 8:00am to 2:00pm and 3:00pm to 8:00pm, Extra fees would be incurred for use of kitchen facilities and large groups. A motion by Councilor Daryl Littlefield and seconded by Councilor Donna Rogers to approve Park and Facility Rental Fees and Form for 2024. The motion passed.

The Borough have had requests from local non-profits to waive use of park/pavilion fees. After much discussion, it was decided that the Parks and Recreation Committee would design a process for such requests at their next meeting, therefore the motion for Request for Waiver of Fees for Park Rental – Generations has been tabled at this time.

Discussion of the Lawn Avenue Park Scoreboard was not approved due to the Council wanting to take a look at all of Borough owned properties to see what the future may be for the space.

Under Administrative Items, Borough Manager Stacy Crandell requested to change our current Short Term, Long Term and Life Insurance carriers to The Standard. This change would request an amendment to the police contract, which the department has stated they would be willing to work with the Borough on. This would be a better benefit for all employees. This will also result in almost \$20,000 in savings for the Borough on an annual basis. A motion by Councilor Donna Rogers and seconded by Councilor Richard Walczak to approve the proposal from the Standard for Short Term, Long Term and Life Insurance for Borough employees effective February 1, 2024. The motion passed.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell discussed our current use of the Cherry Lane property. The discussion referenced the marketing proposal to include the sale of the entire borough property on Cherry Lane. A motion by Councilor Julie Munden and seconded by Councilor Donna Rogers, to amend the marketing proposal to include the sale of the entire borough owned property on Cherry Lane. The motion failed. The Economic Development Committee is going to meet to discuss this matter and come up with a recommendation for an upcoming meeting.



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Ms. Crandell provided an IT update to the Council. The Police are up and running and we are currently working with Premier to update the administrative and wastewater offices. Borough Manager Stacy Crandell went over the Capital Planning Chart and the use of ARPA funds that will expire at the end of the year. Ms. Crandell addressed staffing needs. A motion was made by Councilor Stephanie Hall, and seconded by Councilor Donna Rogers, to put out an RFP for Accounting and Financial Services.

A fee schedule was presented to the board but was tabled at this time to allow for more time to review the information.

The next Work Session meeting would be scheduled for Monday, February 19, 2024. Borough offices will be closed in observation of Presidents' Day, so the Work Meeting has been rescheduled to Tuesday, February 20, 2024.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell spoke to the Council regarding the appointment of a new Borough Solicitor. There were many outstanding firms who submitted a proposal, and the decision was made to select John A. Torrente from Begley, Carlin & Mandio. A motion by Councilor Stephanie Hall and seconded by Councilor Julie Munden to appoint John A. Torrente from Begley, Carlin & Mandio LLP as Borough Solicitor effective January 9, 2024. The motion passed.

It was requested at this time to look for a replacement for the vacancy on the Planning Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Stacy E. Crandell*

Stacy E. Crandell, Secretary